

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

102-11
For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Bristol Union Railway Station

and/or common Bristol Railroad Station (preferred)

2. Location

street & number State Street @ Washington Street _____ not for publication
Ninth
city, town Bristol _____ vicinity of congressional district (William C. Wampler)
state Virginia code 51 county (in City) code 520

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	___ unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name A. F. Barker, III

street & number P. O. Box 1137 Passenger
Station

city, town Bristol _____ vicinity of _____ state Virginia zip code 24201

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bristol City Hall

street & number

city, town Bristol _____ state Virginia zip code 24201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date 1977, 1980 _____ federal ☒ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond _____ state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bristol, Virginia Railroad Station occupies a pivotal location on the edge of the Bristol, Virginia-Tennessee central business district. Built in 1902 by the Norfolk and Western Railway to replace an earlier depot, the Bristol station and its associated freight house are significant components of the cityscape in an area largely altered by urban renewal. Stylistically the station fits into the pattern of early 20th-century American eclecticism, combining Romanesque with various European vernacular modes. The Bristol station was designed by the company architects of the Norfolk and Western Railway. Unfortunately the individual responsible for the design is not known. The original working/construction documents remain in the possession of the company.

The station is constructed of pressed brick and is massed to articulate its three functions. Service facilities such as a newsstand, lunch counter, smoking room, and men's toilet were housed in the first story of the two-story tower; the railroad office was located in the second story. The long seven-bay, one-story mid-section functioned as the ticketing and waiting room, which was divided into areas for men and women. The six-bay, two-story east end was originally partitioned into the baggage and express rooms. The entire structure is underpinned by a limestone foundation that is coursed ashlar above grade and coursed rubble in the basement beneath the freight/baggage room. This basement was originally divided into a boiler room and fuel room. There is a crawl space under the remaining portion of the building.

The well-proportioned, two-story tower is the station's distinguishing feature. At a visually important point it serves as an anchor for the long narrow structure. All first-floor openings on both the tower and remaining portions of the station are framed by window surrounds of pressed brick darker in color than the brick wall. All windows rest on stone sills. A corbeled brick and stone stringcourse indicates the story change and serves the aesthetic function of dividing the whole into pleasing proportions. While the second story is the most detailed part of the station, this detail is delicate and well executed. Large three-part windows, similar to thermal windows frequently employed in railroad stations, are found at the west, north, and south elevations and are capped by semi-elliptical arches formed by alternating brick and stone voussoirs. At the west elevation this large window is positioned between two smaller, double-hung windows that are also capped by jack arches of alternating brick and stone voussoirs. Horizontal and vertical molded brick strips which rest on corbels are used to frame the windows. Diapering further embellishes this framework. A corbel table runs the length of the west, north, and south elevations. The entire upper block is framed by corbeled shoulders. The hipped roof has deep overhanging eaves which are supported by long sawn brackets. A standing-seam metal roof caps the structure. One of two finials remains intact at the tower's ridge.

The long north and south elevations of the ticketing/waiting room and the baggage room are identical. A wooden canopy supported by wrought-iron and wood columns shields all first-floor openings. Clerestory windows, often employed in railroad architecture, give the tall single-story structure the appearance of two stories. Dark pressed-brick jack arches cap each second-level window. The large spandrel of the clerestory, which provides light to the baggage room, is embellished by a number of classical motifs, such as garlands and festoons. The entire structure is covered by a standing-seam metal roof, which is interrupted by two gables. Louvred eyebrows ventilate the attic. The small frame office extension was added to the east end in 1918.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1902 (passenger station)	Builder/Architect	Norfolk and Western Railway,
	1891 (freight house)		Office of Engineers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Occupying a commanding position on the edge of Bristol's commercial district, the Bristol Railroad Station and freight facility are enduring monuments to Bristol's late 19th- and early 20th-century architectural and commercial history. Constructed in 1902, the stone and brick passenger station is significant as one of the last surviving examples of a series of outstanding structures which were designed and built by the Norfolk and Western Railway for its extensive railroad system before World War I. Other notable buildings designed by the company's architects include the Hotel Roanoke as well as the passenger stations at Lynchburg and Norfolk, neither of which is still standing. With these buildings the handsome and commodious union station at Bristol played an important part in promoting passenger traffic on the Norfolk and Western lines. Rendered in a knowing blend of Romanesque and European vernacular idioms, the building exhibits a degree of architectural sophistication that is rarely found in the passenger stations of other medium-size cities in the state.

The construction of the adjoining freight station in 1891 as an addition to a still earlier building attested to the growth in manufacturing and commercial activity that resulted from Bristol's location at the western terminus of the Norfolk and Western and at the eastern terminus of the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia railways in 1885. Locally manufactured cloth, furniture, barrels, boxes, and carriages, as well as lumber, coal, and other minerals were shipped from the Bristol freight facility to points east and west. By the end of the 19th century a company promotional campaign to attract visitors to southwestern cities and resorts served by the Norfolk and Western finally bore fruit, necessitating the development of new passenger depots for Bristol, Galax, and several other smaller towns. Throughout the early 20th century, large increases in passenger traffic in the New River Division of the Norfolk and Western described in the annual company reports more than justified the company's decision to invest in an architecturally distinguished passenger station at Bristol.

As artifacts of the railway system that opened the mineral-rich lands of western and southwestern Virginia to international commerce, the station and freight facility are symbolic of the historic importance of the railroad in the growth and development of the town. Although the two buildings no longer expedite the transport of passengers and freight, the railroad continues to serve the Bristol area through the soon-to-be-merged Norfolk and Western and Southern Railways.

MTP/RAC

9. Major Bibliographical References

Atkinson, Edward. The Future Site of the Principal Iron Production of the World, Baltimore, 1890
Norfolk and Western Railway. Official Guide, Norfolk and Western Railway Company, Industrial
Shippers and Builders. Roanoke, 1905.
Norfolk and Western Railway. Seventh and Eighth Annual Reports of the Directors of the Norfolk
and Western Railway Company. 1903-04. 1904-05. (See Continuation Sheet #2)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4½

Quadrangle name Bristol, Va. - Tenn.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 117 394480 4050450
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point just N of Virginia-Tennessee state line, about 900' N of the intersection of State Street and State Route 34; thence extending 400' SE across railroad tracks; thence extending 450' SSW to N side of State Street; thence extending 450' W along said side of said street; thence extending 600' NNE to point of origin.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date August 1980

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national X state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Tucker Hill, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date SEP 16 1980

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Bristol Railroad Station, Bristol, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

#1

ITEM NUMBER 7

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7. DESCRIPTION:

While the service-area facilities, waiting room benches, and ticketing office have been removed, the original interior sheathing and spatial division remains intact. The waiting room ceiling height is thirty-six feet, of which the first thirteen feet have been covered with chestnut board and batten siding which is capped by a molded cornice with dentils. The remaining wall is plastered. A beamed roof with curved bracket covers supports the entire waiting room. The brackets, beams, and pendant posts are built up of three thicknesses of chestnut.

While neither the passenger station nor the freight house is presently operated by the Norfolk and Western Railway, the tract between the buildings remains in use. The Bristol Railway Station is being rehabilitated by a developer for use as a small commercial mall.

A brick freight house is also associated with the passenger station, but it bears little stylistic resemblance to the station. Differences in architectural styles indicate the freight house was built in two stages. The rear portion was visible in an 1883 drawing of the old railroad station. The western section was added in 1891. While part of it is rented to the Smith-Douglas Company, the structure is still owned by the Norfolk and Western Railway. A long, wide building, the freight house has a standing-seam metal gable roof. Wood brackets with pendants support the deep overhang. Eight bays of openings span the north, or track elevation. A wooden loading platform extends the length of the north elevation. The three-part west elevation is apportioned by four brick pilasters. A corbel table follows the gable line. Painted and scarred brickwork on the west elevation indicates the location of an earlier porch. The freight house interior is intact, and the wooden truss roof and wide board flooring are in good condition.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries of the Bristol Railroad Station are drawn to include the passenger station, freight house, and a portion of the track between them. A total of 4½ acres is included in the nomination.

MEH

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Bristol Railroad Station, Bristol, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

#2

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE

1

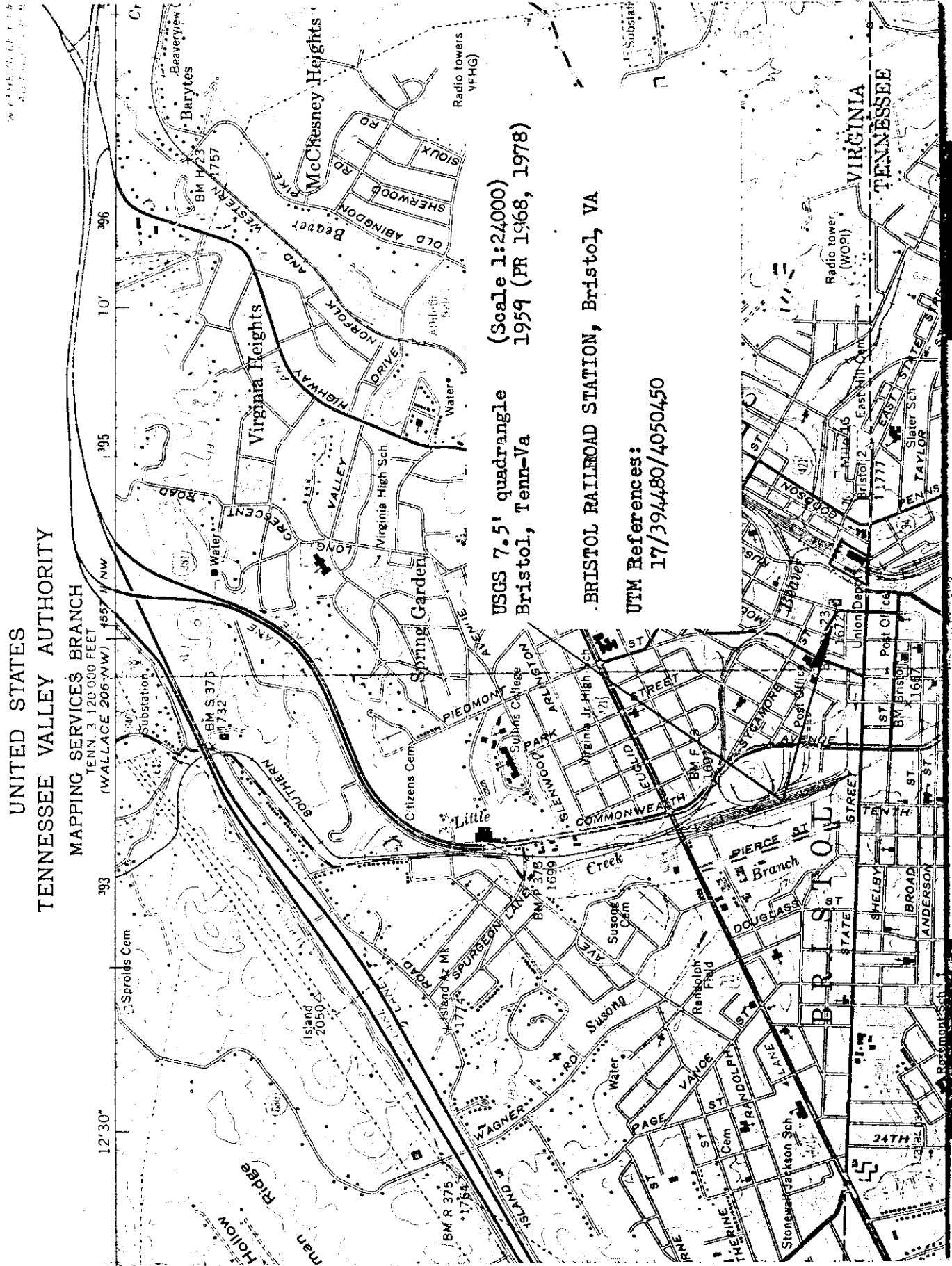
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia Airway Company. The Scenic Attractions and Summer Resorts of the Railways of Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia Air Line ... including the Norfolk and Western. 1883.

A Historical and Descriptive Review of the Industries and Resources of the City of Bristol - Goodson, Tennessee and Virginia. New York: Empire Publishing Company, 1885.

UNITED STATES
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
MAPPING SERVICES BRANCH

TENN. 3 120 000 FEET
(WALLACE 206-NW) 1455' WNW



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (Scale 1:24000)
Bristol, Tenn-Va
1959 (PR 1968, 1978)

BRISTOL RAILROAD STATION, Bristol, VA

UTM References:
17/394480/4050450